



# MANGELOS

\*1921 - 1987

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Dimitrije Bašičević (1921-1987) made his first appearance as Mangelos in a 1968 exhibition in Belgrade. Early in his practice, he produced text-based work, scrawling black marks into notebooks to represent friends and neighbors killed in war, as if they were items stricken from a list. This gesture foretells an interest in written language that would persist throughout Mangelos' career. In the 1950s and 1960s, his primary materials were notebooks, slates and globes; readymades which he transformed and reinterpreted by inscribing onto them letters, words, sentences, Cyrillic or Glagolitic characters, and sometimes longer texts in Latin.

With the aim of developing an art form that freed itself from metaphorical readings, Mangelos created objects that represented their own negation. His "No-Art" arose. He employed a diverse set of strategies to „negate the painting by creating it in the form of words" and „negate the word by painting it." For instance, in *istančanost* (1961), he painted over and obliterated existing material as a way to avoid representing the represented, a practice that runs through his entire oeuvre. Mangelos also achieved "No-Art" by presenting single letters, whose communicative content is wrested from them when extracted from a word, as in Glagolitic letter C (1978). The artist frequently formulated manifestos, providing invaluable insight into the belief systems and philosophies underpinning his practice.

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*Dimitrije Bašičević (died 18th December 1987 in Zagreb) worked as an art critic, curator and artist, and held a PhD in art history. In his writing, he consistently promoted the advancement of abstract art in his home country. Bašičević contributed to the staging of Salon 54, the inaugural exhibition of abstract art in Yugoslavia, and was the first director of the Gallery of Primitive Art in Zagreb. His artistic works, produced under the pseudonym 'Mangelos' and as part of the art-historian-and-artist collective Gorgona, remained hidden from the public for the majority of his life. Today his works can be found in museum collections worldwide including the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), the Tate Modern (London) as well as MOMA / Museum of Modern Art (New York).*